

## **BLAKENALL AND BLOXWICH LOCAL NEIGHBOURHOOD PARTNERSHIP**

**Monday 19 September 2005 at 6.00 pm.**

**at Sneyd Community School, Vernon Road, Bloxwich**

### **Present**

Councillor Rob Robinson (Chairman)  
Inspector Greg Bates  
Mr. Martin Blunt  
Caroline Crolley  
Councillor Louise Harrison  
Councillor Kath Phillips  
Councillor Ian Robertson  
Florence L. Smith  
Councillor Bill Tweddle  
Mr. Alan Venables  
Mr. Kenneth Worley  
Councillor Patricia Young

### **Implementation Team**

Sue Byard  
Ishbel Murray  
Parveen Sangha  
David Hancock

#### **70/05 Introductions**

Members of the Local Neighbourhood Partnership (LNP) introduced themselves to the meeting.

#### **71/05 Apologies**

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor Leslie Beeley, Mr. Peter Brown, Mr. David Chell, Councillor Desmond Pitt, Councillor Melvin Pitt and Ms. Trish Skitt.

#### **72/05 Minutes**

Caroline Crolley referred to various specific requests that were made at the last meeting but were not reflected in the minutes.

## **Resolved**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 20 June 2005, a copy having been previously circulated to each Member of the Local Neighbourhood Partnership be approved as a correct record, subject to the amendments identified at the meeting.

### **73/05 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest identified by Councillors at this meeting.

### **74/05 Nomination to the position of Locally Appointed Partner**

The report of the LNP Selection Panel was submitted:-

(see annexed)

At its meeting on 14 September 2005, the LNP Selection Panel met to consider an application to be approved to the position of a Locally Appointed Partner (LAP) on the Blakenall and Bloxwich LNP.

The Selection Panel, having given due consideration to the application, recommended that the LNP appoint Mr. Westley to the position of LAP on the Blakenall and Bloxwich LNP.

The LNP agreed unanimously that Mr. Fred Westley be appointed as a Member of the Blakenall and Bloxwich LNP for the remainder of the 2005/06 Municipal Year.

## **Resolved**

That Mr. Fred Westley be appointed as a Member of the Blakenall and Bloxwich LNP for the remainder of the 2005/06 Municipal Year.

### **75/05 Petitions**

No petitions were received.

### **76/05 Bloxwich Cemetery**

The LNP considered a report by the Head of Public Protection in relation to Bloxwich Cemetery:-

(see annexed)

The LNP was informed that, at its meeting held on 14 March 2005, the LNP had considered a report which outlined the considerable damage that had, at the time, recently been caused by inconsiderate vehicle drivers at Bloxwich Cemetery. In view of this, the LNP had agreed the following three resolutions:-

- (1) That this LNP urges the Executive Director of Regeneration, Housing and Built Environment and portfolio holder to consider the closure of Bloxwich Cemetery to all vehicular traffic with the exception of funeral corteges or by prior appointment from 10.00 a.m. to 12 noon the following day Monday to Friday;
- (2) That the Cemetery is staffed by a warden during the hours of 10.00 a.m. and 12 noon in order to monitor vehicular access to the cemetery during these hours;
- (3) That the Cemetery remains closed to vehicles at all times during weekends and bank holidays.

These resolutions have now been considered by the portfolio holder and the then Acting Director of Regeneration and the Built Environment in conjunction with the relevant Service Managers.

Of these resolutions, resolution 3 had been implemented. The cemetery was now closed to vehicles at all times during weekends and Bank Holidays. However, to address accessibility issues for disabled badge holders at weekends, the cemetery was accessible on an appointment basis, subject to prior arrangements being made with Bereavement Services.

Alternative proposals were outlined at the meeting as operational difficulties arising from the implementation of resolutions (1) and (2) above would be experienced.

It was proposed that, to prevent a re-occurrence of problems which had been experienced and to balance accessibility needs for responsible visitors, additional vehicle restrictions for access during the week be introduced in addition to the current weekend and Bank Holiday restrictions. However, to avoid introducing a complete vehicular access ban to the Cemetery at all times, it was also proposed to take traffic management steps for a trial period of approximately three months starting from 1 December 2005.

The LNP felt that Bloxwich Cemetery had unique problems due to the design of the existing road infrastructure and the curtilage of the Cemetery.

The LNP sought clarification on whether it would be possible to provide mobility vehicles and designated walkways as well as an adequate number of benches throughout the Cemetery for disabled people and the elderly.

The Head of Public Protection agreed to investigate the feasibility of providing such a service, but informed the Partnership that her initial concerns regarding this request would be that there would be health and safety and funding implications that would need to be taken into account.

Councillor Young asked whether double yellow lines could be provided in the area in question and “vehicle clamping in operation” signs erected to deter drivers from parking and to help alleviate parking problems currently experienced. The Head of Public Protection stated that she would need to consult with the Legal and Highways Sections in relation to this request as she was unsure whether the road in question was an adopted highway and what implications there might be in providing such facilities.

The LNP was of the opinion that, during the operation of the traffic management trial period, the Council needed to be mindful of the needs of the general public visiting the Cemetery. It was also felt that it would be a shame to disadvantage members of the public who visited the cemetery on a regular basis in an orderly manner as a result of the actions of a small minority.

Members of the public asked various questions relating to the operation of the three month vehicular restriction trial, parking problems and public consultations on the proposals.

### **Resolved**

- (1) That the LNP notes that the revised vehicular restrictions are to be adopted for a trial period from 1 December for three months;
- (2) That a further report be presented to a future meeting of the LNP in 2006 detailing the outcome of the trial and picking up the issues raised at the meeting.

## **77/05 Public Forum**

The Chairman invited members of the public to address the LNP at this stage in the meeting.

### **Ashbourne Road Field**

The Chairman welcomed Mr. Parkes to the LNP and invited him to address the meeting.

Mr. Parkes sought the LNPs advice in terms of the latest position with the Village Green Status Application in relation to the land at Ashbourne Road field. He also sought clarification as to a rumour that the Council had approached the LNP for support in designating the land in question as “private land”. The LNP responded to the alleged rumour to which it was not aware of any such proposals.

The Village Green Status Application had been passed to an Independent Inspector who would provide the Council with a recommendation at a future non-statutory Inquiry on whether or not the land should be registered as a Village Green. The Independent Inspector had currently not yet agreed a date with the Council. However, it was reported to the LNP that there was still some confusion as to the ownership of the land which needed resolving and was delaying progress.

### **Anti Social Behaviour – Fisher Road and Abingdon Road, Bloxwich**

The Chairman welcomed Mrs. Shaw to the LNP and invited her to address the meeting.

Mrs. Shaw informed the LNP about the severe anti social behaviour which was currently being experienced in and around the Fisher Road and Abingdon Road area of Bloxwich, and sought its view as to how to deal with the matter.

Mrs. Shaw stated that she had contacted the police several times but, as yet, to no avail. The Chairman and Inspector Bates undertook to liaise directly with Mrs. Shaw outside the meeting and follow up any actions as necessary.

Arising from the issue, Councillor Robinson requested that Parveen Sangha liaise with Peter Brown and arrange for him to produce and deliver a presentation to a future Task Group meeting on the Housing Team’s ASB Policy.

### **Resolved**

That Peter Brown be requested to prepare and deliver a presentation on the Housing Team’s ASB Policy to a future Task Group meeting.

## **78/05 Partnership Plan and Feedback from Task Groups**

The Partnership Plan was submitted:-

(see annexed)

Parveen Sangha of the Neighbourhood Partnership office updated the LNP on the Partnership Plan and of issues arising from the Task Group meeting held on 16 September 2005.

Amongst the issues discussed at the Task Group meeting were youth issues, "Transforming Your Space Update" and, in particular, the BRAG project (Borough Resource Allocation Group).

The Chairman and Parveen updated the LNP on these items.

The BRAG Project was due to come into the Blakenall and Bloxwich area on 1 October 2005, for a period of six weeks. The remit of the BRAG Project was to endeavour to alleviate various problems experienced in the area. Amongst the areas specifically mentioned as issues to be addressed were:-

- ASB
- Crime
- Drug and alcohol abuse
- Fly tipping

Councillor Robinson informed the Partnership that the Task Group had identified nine hot spots and areas within the Blakenall and Bloxwich LNP area for the BRAG Project to address.

The LNP identified further areas which it also felt were worthy of being taken into consideration for action under the BRAG Project.

Inspector Greg Bates was present at the meeting and welcomed the LNPs input and noted the concerns and issues raised. He informed the LNP that BRAG would try to achieve as much as it could during its time limit in operation in the area.

In view of the fact that the BRAG Project was only in the area for six weeks, the LNP were reminded that it could not rectify all the problems in the LNP area. For this reason, it needed to focus on specific areas and issues which were deemed to be realistically and achievable.

In relation to the "Transforming Your Space Update", Caroline Crolley expressed her concern that there had not been sufficient consultation with LNP Members on the documents submitted to the meeting.

### **Resolved**

- (1) That LNP Members continue to attend the workshop meetings;
- (2) That individual LNP Members encourage wider participation from community members within the Task Group;

- (3) That the progress of the transforming your space scheme be noted;
- (4) That dates of future Task Group meetings be noted;
- (5) That the LNP undertake a partnership plan review;
- (6) That the LNP notes and supports the operation of the BRAG Project and various issues raised at the meeting be recommended for consideration under BRAG.

#### 79/05 **Funding Priorities for Action**

Parveen Sangha of the Neighbourhood Partnership office introduced the report:-

(see annexed)

Councillor Robinson introduced Dave Haq, Senior Youth Officer from the Youth Service, to the meeting.

Dave Hack undertook to explain to the meeting an outline of what the Youth Service did and, in particular, what plans it had for the LNP area. He highlighted a recent drive to recruit more youth workers for the area and informed the LNP that some appointments had recently been made. Detached youth workers would be operating from local youth centres/clubs and community buildings within the LNP area in the near future.

Councillor Robinson explained that, at a recent meeting with Andy Driver, Principal Youth Officer within the Youth Service, research had identified a lack of facilities for young people in the Goscote area. Furthermore, arising from the meeting, proposals were made for the LNP to support part funding on youth workers in the Goscote area. However, Members felt that there was an equal need for such provisions identified above to be made in the Lower Farm area. In view of this, the LNP agreed to support the part funding of youth workers in both the Goscote and Lower Farm areas. In relation to this, the Chairman requested that a representative from the Youth Service be asked to attend all future Task Group meetings and LNP meetings.

Members of the LNP asked various questions relating to detached youth workers regarding what programmes were in place at local youth centres and how funding for young people was allocated.

The LNP was unsure of the remit for detached youth workers and sought clarification from Dave Haq. Dave Haq agreed to forward a copy of the job description of detached youth workers to LNP Members so that they could familiarise themselves with the jobs remit.

Parveen updated the meeting on the latest position to date with the other outstanding funding priorities for action. Members of the LNP expressed their dissatisfaction and frustration at the matter as they felt that these priorities had been outstanding for far too long and no or little progress had been made. The LNP held the general consensus that LNP meetings were too far apart and did not meet often enough to keep issues progressing.

### **Resolved**

- (1) That the LNP notes the progress made to date;
- (2) That the LNP supports the proposals for providing part funding for detached youth workers in the Lower Farm/Goscote areas;
- (3) That a representative from the Youth Service be requested to attend all future Task Group meetings and LNP meetings;
- (4) In doing (1) above, Councillor Robinson, Chairman of the LNP, be requested to convey the LNPs dissatisfaction at how the LNP was functioning and the lack of progress made between meetings to the LNP Chairs' Forum;
- (5) That the detached youth workers job description be forwarded to LNP Members for their perusal.

### **80/05 External Funding**

The LNP noted a presentation from Mr. Andrew Rainsford on the work of the Council's External Funding Team. The meeting was informed that the External Funding Team comprised of:-

- Mr. Andrew Rainsford
- Mr. Mike Gaffney
- Mr. Suresh Patel

The remit of the External Funding Team was to:-

- Stretch and maximise the budgets
- Resource delivery of Walsall Vision
- Maximise European Union funding streams and enable access to other funding streams by community/voluntary groups

The LNP was advised that the External Funding Team worked in conjunction with a number of voluntary organisations across the Borough and also with the Council's LNPs. Mr. Rainsford informed the Committee of the contact detail for the External Funding Team.



81/05 **Police Representation**

Members of the LNP raised their concerns over the fact that there was police representation on the LNP which only covered half of the area within the LNPs administrative area.

**Resolved**

That Chief Superintendent Bruce Gilbert be requested to allocate a police representative from his policing area to attend all future Blakenall and Bloxwich LNP meetings.

**Termination of Meeting**

There being no further business, the meeting terminated at 8.37 p.m.

Chairman: .....

Date: .....